

THE ARTICLE

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition has forced a European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot logo on the tail of all its planes because of a flood of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls representing bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture and many would-be passengers thought it just wouldn't do on an airplane. Airline officials were taken aback by the volume of disapproving mail they received. Particularly upset was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "looked just right" and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it flew to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes taxied before take off.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back to their hangars for a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added to the top of the "b". However, this may not go down well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin sounds like the phrase "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were in two minds as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. Frequent business flyer Rene Charles said: "In this day and age, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic behind them." However, she did admit that she shared the concerns of other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines is the result of a merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. An airline changed its logo because it had a big, red "13" in it. T / F
- b. The airline received a flood of emails from complaining passengers. T / F
- c. Airline officials were not surprised at how many emails they got. T / F
- d. "Thirteen" is the number of African destinations the airline flies to. T / F
- e. Airline officials have decided to paint 14 dots on their airplanes. T / F
- f. The number 14 is lucky everywhere in the world. T / F
- g. A frequent business flyer said superstitions are very logical. T / F
- h. Brussels Airlines is the result of a merger with Virgin Express. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. flood | meaning |
| b. would-be | be liked |
| c. taken aback | union |
| d. significance | potential |
| e. resembled | confess |
| f. go down well | deluge |
| g. in two minds | looked like |
| h. logic | undecided |
| i. admit | shocked |
| j. merger | reason |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| a. a flood of | the destinations it flew to |
| b. would-be passengers thought | pattern of lights on an airport runway |
| c. officials were taken | and age |
| d. the number of dots matched | it just wouldn't do |
| e. resembled the | well in China |
| f. go back to their hangars | complaints from passengers |
| g. this may not go down | for a paint job |
| h. Passengers at Brussels airport | aback by the volume of disapproving mail |
| i. In this day | concerns of other passengers |
| j. she shared the | were in two minds |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition has _____ a European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot logo on the tail of all its planes because of a _____ of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls _____ bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture and many would-be passengers thought it just _____ do on an airplane. Airline officials were taken aback by the _____ of disapproving mail they received. Particularly _____ was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "looked just _____" and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it flew to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes _____ before take off.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back to their _____ for a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added to the top of the "b". However, this may not _____ down well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin sounds like the _____ "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were in two _____ as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. _____ business flyer Rene Charles said: "In this day and _____, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic _____ them." However, she did admit that she shared the concerns of other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines is the _____ of a merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

right
wouldn't
flood
upset
forced
taxied
representing
volume

phrase
result
go
age
hangars
frequent
behind
minds

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition _____ European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot _____ its planes because of a flood of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls representing bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture _____ passengers thought it just wouldn't do on an airplane. Airline officials _____ the volume of disapproving mail they received. Particularly upset was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "_____ " and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it flew to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes _____.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back _____ a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added _____. However, this may not go down well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin _____ "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were in two minds as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. Frequent business flyer Rene Charles said: "_____, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic behind them." However, she did admit that _____ other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines _____ merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What adjectives would you use to describe this story and why?
- c) Are you a superstitious person?
- d) Would the 13 dots on the logo have bothered you?
- e) Do you worry about flying and airplane safety?
- f) If you thought something about an airline was unlucky, would you write an email to complain?
- g) Do you have any small rituals/habits you do when you fly?
- h) Do you believe in fate?
- i) What numbers do you consider to be lucky or unlucky?
- j) Would you feel safer flying with Brussels Airlines if the logo had 13 or 14 red dots?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think about what you read?
- c) What do you think of the logo of your country's airline?
- d) What do you think of the Brussels Airlines logo (see p.13)?
- e) How do you think superstitions begin and become part of our culture?
- f) Do you think all superstitions are old, or do new ones come along?
- g) Who is the most superstitious person you know?
- h) Do you have anything you keep with you or use for luck?
- i) Do you think Brussels Airlines should find a fourteenth African destination to match the fourteenth red dot?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition has (1) ____ a European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot logo on the tail of all its planes because of a (2) ____ of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls representing bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture and many (3) ____ passengers thought it just wouldn't do on an airplane. Airline officials were (4) ____ aback by the volume of disapproving mail they received. Particularly upset was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "looked just right" and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it (5) ____ to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes (6) ____ before take off.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back to their (7) ____ for a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added to the top of the "b". However, this may not go (8) ____ well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin sounds like the phrase "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were (9) ____ two minds as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. Frequent business flyer Rene Charles said: "In this day and (10) ____, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic behind them." However, she did (11) ____ that she shared the concerns of other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines is the result (12) ____ a merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) force | (b) forced | (c) forces | (d) forceful |
| 2. | (a) flood | (b) flooding | (c) flooded | (d) floods |
| 3. | (a) would | (b) would've | (c) would have | (d) would-be |
| 4. | (a) presented | (b) stolen | (c) given | (d) taken |
| 5. | (a) flying | (b) fly | (c) flew | (d) flown |
| 6. | (a) taxied | (b) taxi | (c) taxis | (d) taxed |
| 7. | (a) hangouts | (b) hangings | (c) hangars | (d) hangers |
| 8. | (a) out | (b) in | (c) down | (d) up |
| 9. | (a) thinking | (b) having | (c) in | (d) on |
| 10. | (a) age | (b) aged | (c) ageless | (d) ageing |
| 11. | (a) from | (b) of | (c) with | (d) by |
| 12. | (a) importance | (b) tension | (c) pressured | (d) stressed |

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. flood | deluge |
| b. would-be | potential |
| c. taken aback | shocked |
| d. significance | meaning |
| e. resembled | looked like |
| f. go down well | be liked |
| g. in two minds | undecided |
| h. logic | reason |
| i. admit | confess |
| j. merger | union |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| a. a flood of | complaints from passengers |
| b. would-be passengers thought | it just wouldn't do |
| c. officials were taken | aback by the volume of disapproving mail |
| d. the number of dots matched | the destinations it flew to |
| e. resembled the | pattern of lights on an airport runway |
| f. go back to their hangars | for a paint job |
| g. this may not go down | well in China |
| h. Passengers at Brussels airport | were in two minds |
| i. In this day | and age |
| j. she shared the | concerns of other passengers |

GAP FILL:

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition has **forced** a European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot logo on the tail of all its planes because of a **flood** of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls **representing** bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture and many would-be passengers thought it just **wouldn't** do on an airplane. Airline officials were taken aback by the **volume** of disapproving mail they received. Particularly **upset** was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "looked just **right**" and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it flew to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes **taxied** before take off.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back to their **hangars** for a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added to the top of the "b". However, this may not **go** down well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin sounds like the **phrase** "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were in two **minds** as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. **Frequent** business flyer Rene Charles said: "In this day and **age**, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic **behind** them." However, she did admit that she shared the concerns of other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines is the **result** of a merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - b 2 - a 3 - d 4 - d 5 - c 6 - a 7 - c 8 - c 9 - c 10 - a 11 - d 12 - b

